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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/798,124	03/11/2004	Curtis Kirker	066639.0123	6091

31625 7590 10/02/2006

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EXAMINER

REIFSNYDER, DAVID A

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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1723

DATE MAILED: 10/02/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/798,124

Applicant(s)

KIRKER ET AL.

Examiner

David A. Reifsnyder

Art Unit

1723

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 08 September 2006.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-42 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 21-33 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-4, 9, 11-20 and 34-42 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) 5-8 and 10 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>13 /DS's</u> . | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

Restriction to one of the following inventions is required under 35 U.S.C. 121:

- I. Claims 1-20 and 34-42, drawn to a centrifuge, the centrifuge comprising a separation wall placed within a sleeve to form a containment zone therebetween; classified in class 494, subclass 41.
- II. Claims 21-33, drawn to a method of separating more dense material from a fluid medium in a centrifuge comprising a separation wall; classified in class 494, subclass 37.

The inventions are distinct, each from the other because of the following reasons:

Inventions II and I are related as process and apparatus for its practice. The inventions are distinct if it can be shown that either: (1) the process as claimed can be practiced by another and materially different apparatus or by hand, or (2) the apparatus as claimed can be used to practice another and materially different process. (MPEP § 806.05(e)). In this case the instantly claimed process can be practiced by a materially different apparatus, such as a centrifuge which does not have a **sleeve** surrounding the separation wall to form a **containment zone**.

Because these inventions are independent or distinct for the reasons given above and there would be a serious burden on the examiner if restriction is not required because the inventions have acquired a separate status in the art in view of their different classification, restriction for examination purposes as indicated is proper.

Because these inventions are independent or distinct for the reasons given above and there would be a serious burden on the examiner if restriction is not required because the inventions require a different field of search (see MPEP § 808.02), restriction for examination purposes as indicated is proper.

During a telephone conversation with Thomas R Felger on September 6, 2006 a provisional election was made without traverse to prosecute the invention of Group I, claims 1-20 and 34-42. Affirmation of this election must be made by applicant in replying to this Office action. Claims 21-33 are withdrawn from further consideration by the examiner, 37 CFR 1.142(b), as being drawn to a non-elected invention.

Applicant is reminded that upon the cancellation of claims to a non-elected invention, the inventorship must be amended in compliance with 37 CFR 1.48(b) if one or more of the currently named inventors is no longer an inventor of at least one claim remaining in the application. Any amendment of inventorship must be accompanied by a request under 37 CFR 1.48(b) and by the fee required under 37 CFR 1.17(i).

Drawings

The drawings are objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a). The drawings must show every feature of the invention specified in the claims. Therefore, the **“density screen type centrifuge”** of claim 3 must be shown or **claim 3 must be canceled**. No new matter should be entered.

Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended

replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. The figure or figure number of an amended drawing should not be labeled as "amended." If a drawing figure is to be canceled, the appropriate figure must be removed from the replacement sheet, and where necessary, the remaining figures must be renumbered and appropriate changes made to the brief description of the several views of the drawings for consistency. Additional replacement sheets may be necessary to show the renumbering of the remaining figures. Each drawing sheet submitted after the filing date of an application must be labeled in the top margin as either "Replacement Sheet" or "New Sheet" pursuant to 37 CFR 1.121(d). If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

Claim 3 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the enablement requirement. The claim contains subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to enable one skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and/or use the invention.

There is no disclosure which teaches the elements that make up the screen density centrifuge. For example, a screen density centrifuge must include a screen.

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claim 3 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Regarding claim 3; it is vague and indefinite as to what structure the applicant intends to claim by claiming that the centrifuge is a density screen centrifuge. Furthermore, it is vague and indefinite as to how the required structure for a density screen centrifuge (i.e. the screen) is structurally related to the structure already claimed in claim 1.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1-4, 9, 12-20 34 and 37-42 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Komline who discloses a centrifuge (10) with controlled discharge of dense materials. The centrifuge (10) includes a fluid separation wall placed within a

sleeve (13) to form a containment zone therebetween. The fluid separation wall aligns and rotates parallel to an axis of rotation. A receptacle (10a) forming a part of the fluid separation wall includes a void area. An opening extending through the fluid separation wall from the void area to the outer surface of receptacle transports the more dense material to the containment zone. A valve ring (col. 6, lines 40-57) forming part of the fluid separation wall includes a valve orifice (45). The valve orifice (45) aligns with the opening such that the more dense material exits the fluid separation wall and moves into the containment zone (13). Furthermore, regarding claims 17-29,31-34 and 37-42; the valve ring is oscillating and therefore slides along the fluid separation wall. In addition, regarding claim 40; the valve ring includes a plurality of vanes (38c).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

Claims 11 and 36 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Komline who discloses a centrifuge including a separation wall as discussed above but fails to disclose a pressure sensor connected to the separation wall. The use of pressure sensors to measure pressure on a separating wall of a centrifuge is well known; therefore, it is considered that it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to have included a pressure sensor to monitor pressure on Komline's separation wall so as to know when to actuate Komline valve ring and allow the more dense material to be discharged from Komline's receptacle (10a).

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 5, 6-8, 10 and 35 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

The main reason for the allowance of claim 5 over art is that the prior art of record fails to describe or fairly suggest the apparatus as having all the limitations claimed as whole and including a pin operably engaged with the fluid separation wall, the pin extending radially from the fluid separation wall; and a slot formed in the valve ring, the slot operably formed to receive the pin therethrough and to guide the valve ring between the first position and the second position such that a valve orifice aligns with the respective opening in the second position.

The main reason for the allowance of claims 6-8 over art is that the prior art of record fails to describe or fairly suggest the apparatus as having all the limitations claimed as whole and including a pin operably engaged with the valve ring, the pin extending radially through the valve ring to engage a slot; the slot formed in the fluid separation wall, the slot operably formed to receive the pin and to guide the valve ring between the first position and the second position such that a valve orifice aligns with the respective opening in the second position.

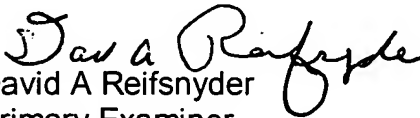
The main reason for the allowance of claims 10 and 35 over art is that the prior art of record fails to describe or fairly suggest the apparatus as having all the limitations claimed as whole and including an upper wedge coupled to the fluid separation wall; the upper wedge operable to restrict the movement of the valve ring; and a lower wedge coupled to the fluid separation wall, the lower wedge operable to restrict the movement of the valve ring.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to David A. Reifsnyder whose telephone number is (571) 272-1145. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 9:00 AM to 5:30 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Wanda M. Walker can be reached on (571) 272-1151. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.


David A Reifsnyder
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 1723

DAR